

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



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Misunderstanding between NAACP and WSP Resolved

This is a follow-up to yesterday's press conference held by the NAACP-King County Branch:

The NAACP voiced concerns about a complaint they filed against the WSP in February, 2005. The concern was with the detective verifying employment of the individual who had filed the initial complaint. **This issue has been addressed and resolved.**

The confusion arose when the case file containing notes from an interview with Sheley Secrest regarding the November 2003 arrest of Omar Wiley were reviewed by another investigator for accuracy. The peer reviewer had a question regarding her employment because the complaint letter received from Secrest was on NAACP letterhead with her title and signature as employed by the NAACP. However, in the interview she had stated she worked for the U.S. District Court. Investigators contacted the employer of Ms. Secrest to clear up the confusion.

Following yesterday press conference by the NAACP where allegations of intimidation were raised, the WSP immediately reviewed the facts and circumstances. The follow-up review process was based upon past practice to clarify all the facts of any internal investigation to ensure accuracy.. After careful review, it was determined that the clarification of Secrest's employment had no impact on this case. The WSP is reviewing this situation, to avoid any future misunderstandings.

Late yesterday, Chief John Batiste called Ms. Secrest and apologized for any misunderstanding.

"We in no way intended to intimidate Ms. Secrest," Chief Batiste said. "It was a situation where our internal affairs office was making sure all the information contained in the internal investigation concerning the Omar Wiley arrest was accurate. I demand that our investigations be factual and accurate to ensure we are accountable to the citizens we serve."

Ms. Secrest accepted Chief Batiste's apology.

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